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## CREATIVE TEAM INTERVIEW QUOTES

### SAMUEL BERNSTEIN (Book and Lyrics)

*What got you interested in doing a show about Bob Harrison and "Confidential Magazine?"*

- "I've always loved the glamour of old Hollywood. Everyone looks so devil-may-care and happily tanked -- with a 'screw-it' attitude that comes from a blessed lack of self-reflection."
- "Writing the book the show is based on started with a fluke. After reading a Vanity Fair article about the 'Confidential' trial, I found out that I actually knew the defendant: the Duchess of Dirt herself, Marjorie Roth (then Meade) -- a Beverly Hills Society woman who didn't exactly hide her notorious past, but it was far from common knowledge. Now, SHE was a tough broad!"
- It seemed a natural subject for a musical. The hyperbolic language, alliteration, and wordplay of the magazine seemed almost like music already. When you launch a Viagra like-product (as Bob did) called Pega Palo, and dub it 'The Vine That Makes You Virile,' it's basically already a song."

On the cast:

- "This is a dream cast at any level of production, NYMF or full-on big budget Broadway. Kevin Spirtas embodies Bob Harrison completely. The last surviving member of the Harrison family, Michael Tobias, gasped when he saw Kevin photographed in costume. 'It's like he's alive again!' he said. This is Kevin's moment. Trust me."
- "Playing 'Jeannie,' Amy Bodnar redefines the idea of the typical blonde with a heart of gold. She brings so much pathos and humor. During rehearsal she commuted from Philadelphia, where she was in 'How to Succeed...' at Walnut Street. That's one hell of a commute -- and a sign of her passion, dedication, and commitment."
- "Erin Leigh Peck has been a Broadway Baby practically since she could walk -- and it shows. In some ways she has the broadest arc in the show: from bored housewife to notorious Duchess of Dirt, and she walks that razor sharp line with enormous skill and heart."
- "Playing a 'villain' can be a trap. If you go too heavy or too broad, all Snidely Whiplash on the audience, you sink. Paul Michael Valley comes from a place of such truth. And that voice!"

On the collaborative team:

- "David and I have known each other for 20 years. Oh my God -- actually closer to 30! He is the perfect person for this show, this era, this genre -- and his orchestration and arranging skills are legendary. He knows the rules. So I break them. Then he makes me follow them. Then I break them again."
- "Stephen is a star. And just as I think this is Kevin Spirtas' moment, I think it's Stephen's too. Quote me. Please."

DAVID SNYDER (Music)

*How did you get involved with Mr. Confidential?*

- “Sam Bernstein and I have known each other for over 20 years, and have stayed in touch ever since an early musical collaboration that shall remain nameless (for good reason). He sent me his book, *Mr. Confidential*, and I couldn't put it down! He so brilliantly captured the rhythm and the syntax of 1950s Hollywood that I could instantly see the possibilities when he suggested it might make a great musical. It has been quite a journey from writing those first songs to where we are today, but it's been a great ride, and we are both proud of the score and the show. It feels incredible to have written a big, classic Broadway musical in the same vein as the favorites I grew up with.”

*What appealed to you most about composing the music for this project?*

- “At around 13 years old, I discovered my parent's collection of Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald and Big Band records, and became obsessed with not only the style of the music, but the creativity of the arrangers and orchestrators of that period ('30s-'50s). For me, there could be no more exciting time for jazz and popular music than the '50s, when the Great American Songbook experienced its richest realization; the sheer brilliance of the songwriting, coupled with the harmonic inventiveness of greats such as Bill Evans, Stan Kenton, Duke Ellington, Nelson Riddle, and their contemporaries elevated song interpretation to an art form. In writing the music for *Mr. Confidential*, I had the happy challenge of composing and arranging in that style, but also infusing elements of musical theatre from outside the strict confines of the period.”

*Who are your greatest inspirations/influences as a composer?*

- “I've been inspired by many of the great theatre composers and orchestrators since I saw my first Broadway show in 1968 (*Hello Dolly!*), but it probably comes as no surprise that Cy Coleman's score for *City of Angels* (with beyond amazing orchestrations by Billy Byers) was a great point of reference for me in writing *Mr. Confidential*. At the same time, I made the decision to depart from a strictly period score when illuminating the inner lives of these characters. Musical theatre today has a rich diversity of dramatic style, from the carefully crafted dissonances of Sondheim and Adam Guettel to the more pop-driven work of Jason Robert Brown, and there are moments in the *Mr. Confidential* score where it felt right to take the music in a more contemporary direction. One of the wonderful things about devoting your life to composing and orchestration is that it keeps you very humble; the more you know about your craft, the more you realize there is to know. I'm very grateful to have found my own voice over the years, and I also acknowledge a great debt to the truly brilliant musicians who have paved the way: Gershwin, Kern, Rodgers, Loesser, Porter, Loewe, Lane and so many others.”

STEPHEN NACHAMIE (Director and Choreographer)

On the show:

- “The fun of this project is seeing how much we ‘haven’t learned’ since the ‘50s. Bob Harrison wanted to crash the ‘celebrity party’ – he wasn’t born a star, so he made himself one. Sam’s book and lyrics and David’s wonderful score take us on a dazzling, vivacious, smart and funny journey through the origins of celebrity gossip.”
- “Developing this work with Sam and David has been a joy. Through exploring Bob and Marjorie’s journeys, we have created a little cautionary tale for the TMZ set. Bob could charm his way in or out of any scandal. The show will hook you on the ride the same way *Confidential Magazine* hooked its readers on its wordplay and gossip.”
- “Sam’s total immersion into the world of *Confidential* and Hollywood glamour and intrigue and the mischief in his writing have paid off in the creating the world of Bob Harrison. David’s music and arrangements pull us right in to a more innocent, more slick, more ambitious time. It’s the ultimate backstage story on all the gossip of who did what after hours.”

On the cast:

- “So thrilled to be working with such a diverse, unique and remarkably talented cast. Excited to be working with the wonderful Kevin Spirtas and his take on Bob. Amy Bodnar is a gem, cut from the cloth of Judy Holliday. Smart, funny and always vulnerable.”

On the team:

- “Sam’s wit and style shine in this piece. It has been a thrill to develop and explore this world and its marvelous inhabitants with him. He knows this world like no other.”
- “David’s compositions have such a joy and mischief to them. It is rare that you get to hear an ensemble make such a joyous, harmonious and sophisticated sound. New York, get ready.”